

March 21, 2010

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*Historic Vote Means End to Insurance Company Abuses, Lower Costs,
Access to Same Kind of Health Care Available to Members of Congress*

(WASHINGTON, DC) - Congressman Russ Carnahan (MO-3) today released the following statement after casting his "Yes" vote in favor of historic health insurance reform legislation that will prevent insurance companies from denying coverage to people with preexisting conditions or dropping coverage when people get sick, rein in rising costs and make coverage affordable for families and small businesses, and give Americans access to the same kinds of coverage choices available to Members of Congress.

The health reform package approved tonight by the U.S. House of Representatives has been endorsed by over 360 health care, business, consumer and faith-based groups, including the AARP, the American Medical Association, the Catholic Health Association, the Main Street Alliance and the American Nurses Association.

"Today, history was made.

I am honored to have been elected three times on a platform of fixing our broken health care system. Through all these years I have heard hundreds of stories from individuals, families, businesses and health care professionals - stories that made it painfully clear that we simply cannot afford to do nothing.

But the status quo has fought change tooth and nail, playing political games to block,

delay, distort, intimidate and say no to progress.

Today, hope and change has triumphed over fear and obstruction.

Today was for Sharon, whose husband has Parkinson's Disease, and whose medication costs quadruple every May, when he falls into the Medicare 'donut hole.'

Today was for Mary, whose has lived in fear of losing her coverage because she knows her son will be refused coverage because of his preexisting condition.

Today was for Michelle, who can't afford health coverage for the employees in her small bookstore.

Today was for Stacy, whose grandmother died because she didn't have access to preventative care, leaving her family devastated and her grandfather broke from medical debt.

An American President once said, "There has long been a need to assure every American financial access to high quality health care. As medical costs go up, that need grows more pressing. Now, for the first time, we have not just the need but the will to get this job done."

That President was Richard Nixon in 1974.

Indeed, the fight for quality, affordable health care dates back nearly 100 years, when Teddy Roosevelt called for reform. That call has been echoed by Democratic and Republican Presidents alike - Eisenhower, Kennedy, Nixon - and even Missouri's own Harry S Truman. Both presidential candidates in 2008 - Obama and McCain - proposed major health insurance reform to fix our broken system.

Today, we have finally fulfilled this century-old mission.

No longer will older Americans face financial ruin because they can't afford to purchase

life-saving medicine.

No longer will parents fear that their children will be denied coverage because they have a pre-existing condition

No longer will small businesses be forced to choose between health care or hiring additional employees.

And no longer will people die, in the wealthiest country in the world, simply because they cannot afford care.

That all ends today, with the passage of a bill that will stop the insurance companies from denying care to people who are sick and rein in rising costs to make health care more affordable, giving everyone access to the kind of health care choices available to Members of Congress.

It's about time."

-- Congressman Russ Carnahan (MO-3)

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